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President: Mr. Neil (Vice-President) ..... (Jamaica)

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In the absence of the Ms. Risa (Finland), Mr. Neil (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

Panel on the role of the common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in country-level coherence and coordination (E/2004/CRP.7, E/2004/CRP.9 and E/2004/CRP.10)

1. **The President** welcomed the panellists and announced that Mr. Massimo D'Angelo, Chief of the Development Cooperation Policy Branch in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, would act as moderator.

2. **Mr. D'Angelo** (Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the conference room paper on the evaluation of the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (E/2004/CRP.10) took stock of the impact of the CCAs and UNDAFs on the quality of documents, the United Nations system and recipient countries and the cost-effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development.

3. Coherence and coordination had long been a goal of United Nations development cooperation policy. Although the CCAs and UNDAFs were not the only mechanisms available to achieve that goal, they reflected a determined effort to unify and rationalize the work of the United Nations system at the country level, especially by assessing development challenges and establishing a coherent strategic framework for development cooperation. In that regard, General Assembly resolution 44/211 recognized the importance of integrating operational activities for development of the United Nations system with national plans and objectives.

4. Since 1989, a resident coordinator system and many modalities that had shaped operational activities and interaction among United Nations agencies had evolved. However, poor conditions had delayed the implementation of an integrated response to national needs and priorities through such mechanisms as the CCA and UNDAF. The United Nations system had previously sought specific ways to integrate the activities of the United Nations system at the country level into international priorities, through the Country Strategy Note (CSN), for example.

5. However, by 1995 only 21 out of 85 countries had completed a CSN. By 1998, of the 90 countries that had expressed an interest in formulating a CSN, only 33 had completed the process. No other CSN had been launched since then, and the instrument had practically become irrelevant as a means to achieve coherence in the United Nations operational activities for development. The CCAs and the UNDAFs had practically taken over that process.

6. The 1995 triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR) had described several of the difficulties in implementing the CSN. Governments had often been reluctant to start a CSN, and the United Nations system had not always been actively involved in the process. Some government officials had questioned the appropriateness of a Country Strategy Note that focused only on the United Nations system instead of a development strategy that could cover all external assistance. At the same time, the United Nations system had not provided consistent support to country teams to undertake the CSN process. Information sharing among agencies, which continued to be a basic requirement for coordinating activities and strategic approaches, was far from satisfactory within the United Nations system. In addition, both the documents and CSN processes in countries where the CSN had been completed were often inadequate.

7. Despite such negative results, the CSN experience had provided useful lessons for the CCAs and UNDAFs. There were a few cases in which the Country Strategy Note had involved the participation of both United Nations system and government and had succeeded in establishing an effective framework for strategic programming of United Nations operations.

8. Integrated follow-up to and implementation of major United Nations conferences in the past decade had also contributed to the development of the CCAs and UNDAFs. Once the notion of an integrated follow-up to international conferences had been launched, both the United Nations system and the intergovernmental machinery had recognized the need to use the CSN to support country-level implementation of major United Nations conferences.

That role had subsequently been entrusted, inter alia, to the CCAs and UNDAFs, and had been further refined with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration.

9. Only after the introduction of the Secretary-General's reforms and a number of measures in 1997, such as the establishment of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the launch of the UNDAF process, had the coherence of the United Nations system in development cooperation been enhanced. The UNDG and its secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office (DGO), had the necessary technical and operational capabilities to support country-level effort and the CCA and UNDAF processes.

10. The support provided at the country level by UNDG and its organizations, especially the funds and programmes of the UNDG Executive Committee, which included training, technical backstopping and personnel to facilitate the process, had been critical. To date, 106 countries had prepared CCAs and 85 countries had an UNDAF. Those results had not been achieved without difficulties, which was why the General Assembly had repeatedly asked the Secretary-General to evaluate the UNDAFs and CCAs.

11. The quality and value of the UNDAFs and CCAs had changed over time as the United Nations system and the Country Teams had been learning from experience. Sixteen countries had completed two rounds of CCAs and 11 countries had completed two rounds of the UNDAF. Net improvements had been noticed in countries that had undergone those processes twice.

12. Meanwhile, UNDG had introduced various generations of guidelines for the formulation of both the CCAs and UNDAFs, most recently in October 2003. The new set of guidelines had introduced tools such as the UNDAF results matrix, joint strategy meetings, the UNDAF monitoring and evaluation plan, the quality support and assurance system and the use of results-based terminology. Recent initiatives in the area of joint programming and joint evaluation could strengthen internal coherence within the United Nations system, partly as a result of the reciprocal inter-agency collaboration at the country level that the implementation of those two mechanisms had generated.

13. **Mr. Severino** (Member of the Evaluation Team for the CCA and UNDAF) said that the extent to which the CCAs and UNDAFs had promoted coherence and coordination at the country level varied. The evaluation had found, however, that the two mechanisms had promoted greater coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system, in particular among the funds and programmes of the UNDG Executive Committee. Furthermore, the CCAs and UNDAFs were important tools for focusing on the Millennium Development Goals and incorporating those Goals into the national agendas, as were other measures such as the resident coordinator system, United Nations Houses, United Nations country team schemes and others.

14. There was a need to enhance awareness about the nature and purposes of the CCAs and UNDAFs within the United Nations system and to train personnel in the field in the use of the instruments. In many countries, cultural change was required so that United Nations teams could coordinate their activities rather than act as separate, independent agencies. The coherence and coordination in the United Nations development system also greatly depended on personalities and the institutional arrangements in place.

15. Another difficulty in implementing the CCAs and UNDAFs was that they were mandatory only for the funds and programmes of the UNDG Executive Committee, which cooperated with United Nations country teams to varying degrees. The Bretton Woods institutions were not greatly involved with United Nations country teams. Furthermore, there were agencies with no field officers or any presence in specific countries. Therefore, greater involvement of specialized agencies in the CCA and UNDAF processes was needed, particularly those with no or limited field presence.

16. There was also some overlap of the functions of various agencies. Furthermore, their outlooks on the CCAs and UNDAFs diverged. Agencies involved in development work, for example, tended to have a longer-term perspective than those doing humanitarian work. The preoccupation with the Millennium Development Goals had sometimes meant that economic concerns had not been given the priority they deserved. It was important to include in the CCA and UNDAF processes such agencies as United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, neither of which had field offices. Individual agencies must not only coordinate among themselves but also harmonize their activities with the content and cycles

of recipient countries' programmes, which raised the question of whether Executive Committee agencies should have one country programme among themselves.

17. It was just as important to ensure coherence and coordination in recipient countries. There had always been a tendency for such issues to remain in the hands of Ministries of Planning, but the line ministries responsible for individual policy areas must also be drawn into the process. Ministries should be encouraged to communicate not only with each other, but with a wider range of United Nations agencies. Another important part of the debate on the CCA and UNDAF process was to determine ownership of development policy and to decide whether it should remain in the hands of Governments alone, or be shared with wider society. The CCAs and UNDAFs were currently capable of promoting coherence and coordination in recipient countries. However, their success depended on the methods used, which must take account of the diversity of the recipient countries themselves.

18. The matter of donor-country coherence and coordination must also be examined. Ministerial conflict was common, as the interests of a ministry of foreign affairs and a ministry of finance, for example, could not always be expected to coincide. Aid agencies in donor-country capitals and their representatives dealing with international organizations in New York, Geneva and Washington must act together. Above all, donor countries must ensure that they did not take back with their right hand what their left hand had given: all too often, a donor country's official development assistance was undermined by its other policies, such as protecting trade and subsidizing agriculture. The external evaluators thought that bilateral donors should not be directly involved in establishing each UNDAF, but should take it into account when determining their own plans.

19. The need for coherence and coordination also extended to relations between United Nations agencies and recipient countries. In that regard, the CCAs and UNDAFs must be treated differently from each other. The Council had always advocated giving ownership of UNDAFs as completely as possible to the recipient country which would be responsible for implementing its components. Responsibility for each CCA should ideally be shared between United Nations agencies and the recipient country to provide a common basis for the assessment. If each CCA was handled only by the United Nations agencies, the recipient countries might disregard it. If it was handled only by the recipient country, there might be a mismatch between the plans made and the ability to implement them. However, the very act of sharing the assessment demanded that a compromise should be negotiated between the parties. That compromise held its own risk: in the effort to satisfy all those involved, the assessment might be diluted.

20. One possible solution to the "ownership" question was to make each CCA the joint responsibility of the appropriate United Nations Country Team and the Government of the recipient country. However, relations between the United Nations Country Team and the Government must be good. Good relations were even more important in the case of the UNDAFs, which often could not be properly implemented without difficult government policy decisions.

21. The Country Teams' approach should be discussed. For many Country Teams, decisions were guided by a "rights-based" approach. He interpreted that to mean that development was considered one of many fundamental rights; if that was the correct interpretation of the concept, it would be useful to spell it out. Another aspect of the rights-based approach which could be explored was how human rights were regarded. Some Country Teams emphasized a country's duty to comply with international human rights instruments, while others emphasized a country's capacity to do so.

22. The external evaluators had also examined the relationship between the CCAs and UNDAFs, the recipient countries' national development plans and the poverty-reduction strategies established with the Bretton Woods institutions. Ideally, they should dovetail.

23. Thought must be given to ways to make the CCA and UNDAF processes more effective. In the view of the external evaluators, better training inside the United Nations system was the key to improvement. Governments and citizens of the recipient countries must also be made aware of the function of the CCA and UNDAF: they should be portrayed as a development advocacy tool focusing on the Millennium Development Goals. The function of the resident coordinator should also be improved, since it was the driving force behind the UNDAF process.

24. The existence of the CCAs and UNDAFs had not lowered the transaction costs of United Nations development activities, because their preparation was demanding in terms of meetings, paperwork and time. However, United Nations staff in headquarters and field posts alike seemed to agree that the time spent on the CCA and UNDAF processes was worthwhile because it improved coherence and coordination. The evaluation had concluded that it was still too early to assess the impact of the CCA and UNDAF processes as they had not yet been exploited to the full. They certainly did not seem to have produced any harmful effects.

25. **Mr. D'Angelo** (Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that evaluation of all the effects of the CCA and UNDAF processes was difficult but necessary, as it was the only way to achieve an overview of the situation. The situations of individual countries differed widely, but keeping that fact in mind brought a sense of realism to the evaluation exercise.

26. **Mr. Lissner** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in Bangladesh) said that in Bangladesh, where there were 25 bilateral donors and United Nations agencies, official development assistance accounted for only a small percentage of the gross domestic product, so donors could not expect the Government to devote substantial ministerial time to it. By contrast, official development assistance made up 45 per cent of its annual development budget, so donors could expect some time to be spent on providing coherence, coordination and structure for that aid. While every sovereign country had the right to determine its development priorities, it could not ignore U..ited Nations conventions, standards and accumulated wisdom.

27. In view of the panoply of development planning instruments and frameworks, generating "framework fatigue", there was much to gain by bringing the various formulas closer together. The CCAs and UNDAFs were the contribution of the United Nations to that task, but the Organization must work harder to build linkages with the instruments of the Bretton Woods institutions.

28. Efforts must also be made to remind developing countries that membership of international bodies involved obligations, and that it was difficult to justify exemptions from decisions taken collectively by those international bodies. A delicate balance was gradually emerging: on the one hand, awareness that development planning instruments could not adopt a "one size fits all" approach, and on the other hand, awareness that the enormous sums of official development assistance must be judged against some form of international standard to ensure that they had a productive outcome.

29. Echoing Mr. Severino's remarks, he said that the main result of the CCA and UNDAF processes was more dialogue within the United Nations system and between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. Governments had also become aware that their own line ministries must work more closely with each other on planning to ensure that official development assistance was put to good use.

30. He doubted that the CCA and UNDAF processes had brought lower transaction costs, but they had made the approach to issues much more inter-disciplinary. For example, HIV and AIDS had previously been viewed as a health issue alone but were currently considered in an economic and social context as well. The CCA and UNDAF processes could encourage such learning from experience.

31. The rights-based approach had been introduced successfully in Bangladesh with the 1999-2000 CCA. Education offered a good example of the thinking behind the approach. The Jomtien Conference on Education for All had created a right to education, which must be translated into action. The CCAs and UNDAFs should focus on norms established by international conventions.

32. He hoped that efforts would be made to close the gap between the global instruments discussed at the United Nations or in the Bretton Woods institutions and the reality on the ground in developing countries, where good or bad social planning and governance actually had life or death consequences. Success in those efforts would help to make the United Nations more relevant and would guarantee the national and global rights of every individual citizen.

33. **Mr. Lindores** (Former Senior Vice-President, Canadian International Development Agency) said that his views were not those of an expert on the CCA and UNDAF processes, but rather of an interested outside observer.

34. The United Nations had provided superb intellectual leadership to the world by achieving a universal consensus around the Millennium Development Goals. It had been able to do so only because of the breadth of its own experience of reality on the ground. Unfortunately, that leadership had not been rewarded by an increase in flows of official development assistance to translate the Goals into action.

35. He had spent many years trying to convince government officials of the benefits of the United Nations over other channels of assistance. They had tended to make broad characterizations, and direct flows of official development assistance accordingly. It had been common for NGOs to be seen as fairly cost-effective, the Bretton Woods institutions as powerful and businesslike, national aid programmes as easy to control and good for bilateral relations and the United Nations as idealistic and hampered by complex decision-making.

36. That impression was compounded by the view that the many United Nations agencies present on the ground were competing with each other rather than working together. The CCA and UNDAF processes could help to develop an easily explainable, system-wide approach to development assistance. However, discussion of those instruments within the United Nations system was not enough: they must be "sold" to donors who often demanded more coherence and coordination of international agencies than they did of their own national departments and agencies.

37. The growing trend of Governments to earmark resources for a particular purpose rather than for core funding was itself undermining coherence and coordination. Again, the problem was one of perception. Governments contributing to the core resources of agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF must accept that 30 to 40 per cent of those contributions would go towards maintaining the agency's central system. If the contributions went to non-core resources, that portion was 10 to 15 per cent. The major funds and programmes must therefore examine the recovery of programme support and administrative costs for non-core resources versus core resources. Donors must be convinced to separate the idea of cost-effectiveness from the idea of coherence and coordination: the latter required investment.

38. Narrowly focused supporting activities in which the United Nations had valuable expertise could be critical to development, yet CCFs and UNDAFs tended to exclude them as being too specific. It should be possible for such specific development activities to be conducted outside the scope of CCFs and UNDAFs without undermining the CCFs and UNDAFs themselves.

39. Many of the agencies competing for resources with the United Nations had more decentralized field operations than the Organization. In order to act successfully at country level, multiple players must be able to gather locally to deal with programming issues. Currently, the offices of most Resident Coordinators did not have the mandate or resources to fulfil that role for the United Nations. He doubted that UNDP alone could shoulder that programming burden adequately in the future, so other United Nations programmes and agencies must provide financial support.

40. The CCAs and UNDAFs had helped to improve the image of the United Nations system in the field as a common effort of many to achieve a coherent overall set of goals. While much remained to be done, great strides had been made in moving a complex and highly political system in the direction of greater coherence, and it was that message that must be consistently communicated to national capitals. Complex systems could not be changed overnight. Having interacted with the United Nations for over 30 years, he had been greatly surprised by the progress it had made in the previous decade alone. The credit for the improvement lay as much with individual programme managers as with the agencies' governing bodies.

41. **Ms. Timpson** (Special Adviser on Community-Based Initiatives in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and former United Nations Resident Coordinator in Costa Rica and the Philippines) explained that the purpose of CCAs and UNDAFs was to translate development agendas into national terms, which would require focus on process. People-centred development was highly complex. The economic focus and development environment were constantly changing, and keeping abreast required flexibility, continuous adjustment and learning from experience. There was no one answer or model; alternatives must be tested within the national framework in order to provide options. There would always be resistance to change. Political and social

sensitivities such as sovereignty came into play, as well as powerful vested interests supporting the status quo.

42. National capacity-building was the key to transformation and could influence development systems. To promote the sustainability of national processes and systems, CCAs and UNDAFs had to be aligned with them. National ownership was vital; it was therefore necessary to determine the best kind of incentives and rewards to offer to agents of change, and to identify such agents and support them. CCAs should contribute to dialogue with as many national actors as possible, in all areas of Government and in civil society, academia and the business sector. UNDP Human Development Reports had shown the usefulness of involvement at the national level. The reports were prepared by nationals of the countries concerned, who could speak more openly than United Nations officials. In addition, national participation helped to break down the "us and them" barrier.

43. After so many United Nations conferences at which Governments had committed themselves to follow-up measures, framework fatigue was a key problem. Another was timing, which required flexibility. Governments changed regularly, and if local rhythms could be made to fit with CCAs and UNDAFs, the United Nations would have more influence.

44. In order to enhance its capacity to support development, the United Nations must build on its strengths and, taking advantage of its representation through its agencies in different parts of society, build bridges among actors. Knowledge management was another area needing enhancement, particularly the sharing of lessons from global experience, and South-South learning.

45. Looking to the future, the three main considerations were system coherence; the issues of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) versus the country team versus the United Nations system; and the mandate of the specialized agencies. Many agencies could play a greater role in development; what was needed was imagination in determining what they could do. At the same time, the Organization's image must be re-examined. Identity and visibility might conflict with national ownership, demand with a results-based, supply-driven approach. Sometimes a lower profile might be more productive. A Government might be embarrassed to admit to seeking help from outside agents, or might have more room to manoeuvre in human rights matters if they were handled discreetly. Over-emphasis on scheduling might adversely affect national processes and ownership.

46. She cautioned against spending too much time on theory to the detriment of delivery. It was essential to understand where priorities lay, particularly when resources were limited. Also, too much focus on a few core issues risked narrowing the field to those that were relevant to one agency only, instead of promoting complementarity to achieve better results.

47. **Mr. van der Velden** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed support for CCAs as an instrument to analyse national development situations and identify national capacities to deal with them. The Union endorsed the UNDAF as the framework for a collective, coherent and integrated response at the country level. It welcomed the intensity with which UNDG had fostered reform within the Bretton Woods institutions. There was still room for improvement in the harmonization of CCA and UNDAF time-cycles with those of national strategies. For maximum impact, sequencing was also important. Where possible, the CCA should be available before the formulation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the UNDAF should be drafted in conjunction with it. The Union reiterated the importance of a rigorous CCA, which added value to the PRSP process and assisted Governments in identifying root causes of development challenges. The Union was concerned about the proliferation of analytical documents and corresponding requests for data, and urged efforts aimed at reducing duplication.

48. He requested further information from Mr. Severino regarding his evaluation of the specialized agencies in CCA and UNDAF processes. He requested Mr. Lissner's opinion on the extent to which the United Nations adopted a harmonized rights-based approach. He would be interested to know what, in Mr. Lindores's opinion, was the ideal ratio between core and non-core resources for United Nations agencies. Also, he wanted to know how a unified, streamlined effort would be ensured when some parts of the system were operating outside the common planning umbrella. He asked Ms. Timpson to provide information on the degree to which CCAs and UNDAFs had been useful in identifying overlaps between the various agencies.

49. **Mr. Essel** (Ghana) said he had no doubt about the usefulness of CCAs and UNDAFs, which seemed to be an objective attempt to analyse the development priorities of countries and find ways of tackling them. However, at the national level development priorities often tended to become somewhat skewed by being treated as political issues. Ideally the efforts of the various development partners should dovetail, but in practice they did not achieve that on the ground, and in the process lost momentum. He asked the panellists how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) could realistically be translated into national priorities in both recipient and donor countries so that they were accepted as national objectives irrespective of the concerns of individual political parties.

50. **Mr. Balarezo** (Observer for Peru) said that, when the MDGs came to be reviewed in 2005, national plans would be examined to see how they could supply the necessary investment to ensure that the MDGs were achieved. Looking at national needs and national investment requirements would involve a framework different from that of CCAs and UNDAFs. The Secretary-General's evaluation (E/2004/CRP.10) stated that, where a poverty reduction strategy was widely acknowledged by all development partners, it had been suggested that the CCA might not be necessary. He wondered whether the panellists had any comment on that suggestion.

51. The discussion had centred on aligning the two frameworks with national priorities, and even with political cycles, but the microeconomic frameworks with which they were being aligned had an impact on the instruments themselves, and one panellist had indicated that the CCAs and UNDAFs to some extent lacked an economic component. There was strong emphasis in both on the social element, but the sustainability of the MDGs required an economic framework. They had to be comprehensive, involving all agencies, and had to refocus on the economic elements if poverty was to be eradicated.

52. **Mr. Hofer** (Observer for Switzerland) welcomed the evaluation (E/2004/CRP.10) as a serious attempt to review and to continue to build structures and procedures that would help in the achievement of the MDGs. He complimented the various agencies concerned on the progress that had been made to achieve coherence and coordination between the various approaches. Noting that the term "framework fatigue" had been used during the panel presentation, he said that despite visible efforts to reduce complexity there were still too many processes and documents that had to be discussed when trying to understand how all the various structures worked. Furthermore, many of those processes and documents were difficult to understand, if a hierarchical or subsidiarity approach were adopted. The term "ownership" seemed to be used in quite different ways by different individuals, and it was still somewhat unclear what the linkage was between Poverty Reduction Strategies, CCAs, UNDAFs, working programmes, country assistance strategies and the business plans of various agencies. They all had to be made clearer. The UNDP Administrator had stated at the previous meeting that he foresaw budget support as being an instrument in the future. However, if that direction were taken, it would not be sufficient to view the system, as Mr. Severino had, in terms of the three categories, namely the United Nations system, the recipient countries and the donor countries. If, for example, UNDP were to assume a greater technical assistance role in the future and the finances came from outside the system, it would be necessary to enlarge the analysis to embrace the entire official development assistance (ODA) system. The further task would then be to ensure coherence and coordination within the entire system. He commended the various agencies on their efforts to adopt a results-based management approach, but that approach made sense only if it was ultimately possible to give a consolidated opinion as to whether the various efforts that had been made had genuinely contributed to development at the country level. A system was needed which provided sufficiently well-defined indicators to give a clear view of what had been achieved and what had not.

53. **Mr. Yan** Wenlong (China) said that his country viewed the role played by the CCA/UNDAF processes in terms of their role in coordinating bodies at the national level. Practice had shown that their coordinating role allowed the agencies concerned to have reference points to help them identify the priorities and development needs of the recipient countries, thereby enhancing effectiveness and making better use of limited resources. China believed that the guiding role and primacy of national governments with regard to development assistance was essential in terms both of investigating national conditions and of working out a framework programme. That key government role ensured general overall coordination and harmonization of the CCA and UNDAF processes

with national social and economic development programmes. It was essential that the UNDAF process be results-based. A new UNDP process had been launched in China and the Chinese Government intended to work closely with all the agencies concerned on the basis of mutual respect and coordination.

54. **Mr. Avontroodt** (Belgium), noting a reference by one of the panellists to the crucial issue of the personality of the Resident Coordinator and his or her key importance for the success of United Nations Country Teams and CCA/UNDAF implementation, asked what happened if performance fell below standard and what standards were applied.

55. **Mr. Severino** (Member of the Evaluation Team for the CCA and UNDAF evaluation) said that the role of the specialized agencies in the CCA/UNDAF processes was valuable, indeed essential, particularly in those countries where they had, or should have, programmes, but their role was often circumscribed by practical difficulties, such as the fact that they might not have a presence in the country concerned. As to whether there was a need for UNDAF in countries where the United Nations presence was limited, the answer was in the affirmative: no matter how small the programme, it would still benefit from stronger coherence and coordination.

56. Turning to the question about the value of including development issues and not just social issues in CCA/UNDAF coverage, he admitted that he did not know precisely how those issues should be incorporated. As for the incorporation of the MDGs in national development plans, it varied from country to country, and he had been referring to an ideal situation. Certainly economic concerns should be included when it came to the attainment of MDGs. As for budgetary support from ODA requiring a global view of the entire system, that was an argument for broader coverage and inclusion of participation in the CCA and UNDAF processes. With regard to the primacy of national governments in the process, it was certainly true that national governments were expected to take the lead in the participation of recipient countries, but the degree to which their role was exclusive varied from country to country. He had emphasized the importance of NGOs being regarded as participants in the process.

57. **Mr. Lindores** (Former Senior Vice-President, Canadian International Development Agency) said that his ideal ratio for core/non-core funding would be 100 per cent to zero. That was because over the years he had witnessed a significant dilution of the fundamental principles of multilateralism. When it came to the financing of development assistance and technical cooperation, one of the most important principles of multilateralism was for money to be pooled and decision-making shared among the partners in the programme. To the extent that there had been consistent efforts to find a way around that procedure, the institutions had been weakened and the importance of participative decision-making ventures with others diminished. As to what happened if some of the smaller organizations were allowed to work outside the CCA/UNDAF processes, it was his belief that certain elements of choice within a market for the supply of services were better than no choice, and that it was simply not cost-efficient to bring organizations with very small activities in a country into a planning process in which it might be expensive for them to participate and where that cost might not be in line with the value added of their participation. However, they should clearly not do anything that was inconsistent with the fundamental thrust of the planning documents. There were many organizations throughout the United Nations system which had created very useful pools of highly specialized normative policy and practical development work but which were not part of the big programming mechanisms and the chances of incorporating them were limited, particularly if they were restricted to just a few major strategic themes.

58. **Ms. Timpson**, (Special Adviser on Community-Based Initiatives in UNDP and former United Nations Resident Coordinator in Costa Rica and the Philippines) said that UNDAF addressed overlaps by bringing agencies working on a particular theme together under the focus area and Results Matrix. The problem was, however, that some of the themes did not fit within the MDGs and were really represented by only one agency in a country. Her concern would be more that the joint programming focus left out those issues where there was not overlapping. It was certainly necessary to look at economic issues to see how they affected poverty. One of the reasons why the MDGs had become the focus of the system was because of the way economics had been viewed in the past: some of the issues where there were perhaps not market-based indicators and real costs were not

reflected in economic analyses had tended to be left out.

59. **Mr. Lissner** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in Bangladesh), referring to a question about making MDGs national priorities, commended the first MDG report from Viet Nam, which had provided specific indicators of MDG achievement for each of the country's 60 provinces. That information represented an incredibly powerful political tool. As for guaranteeing continuity if there was a change of political party, he said that in Bangladesh, where elections were scheduled for 2006, he was having discussions with the opposition with the full agreement of the Government.

60. There was not really a harmonized approach for the rights-based perception, because different institutions within the United Nations system had very different views of their own mandates. Some saw themselves as having an advocacy function as much as a technical assistance function. A harmonized approach should not be sought; rather, each agency should be encouraged to pursue its rights-based agenda as much as possible.

61. There was no simple answer to the question regarding the hierarchical relationship between the various development planning frameworks, since they originated from different institutional processes. Thus it was his belief that UNDAF should be rights-based because the PRSP processes and MDGs were target-based. The two approaches were complementary, and each had something important to offer. UNDAF was certainly needed: if a country received considerable ODA, it was possible to direct measures to where they were best applied; if, however, a country had a very small ODA input, the approach would be to identify which United Nations agency mandate was most relevant.

62. As for the Resident Coordinator system, there was now an elaborate system of appraisal whereby all United Nations agency representatives were at liberty to submit an appraisal of how the Resident Coordinator was performing. UNDP also had partnership surveys in which it asked bilateral donors, government partners and NGOs how they perceived its ability to bring the United Nations system together. There were also staff surveys and indicators regarding the degree of dialogue present in joint programmes.

63. **Mr. D'Angelo** (Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch Department of Economic and Social Affairs) thanked the panellists for a debate which had further confirmed the complexity of the issues connected with the conception and implementation of the CCA and UNDAF processes. As for their impact on coherence, it seemed on the whole to have been positive, although the accomplishments had not been without problems.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.